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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

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APRIL PASTURE REPORT

Farm pastures appear to have gotten off to a slow start this season with cold weather delaying the growth of grass over most of the country east of the Rocky Mountains. For the country as a whole, pasture conditions on April 1 as reported by crop correspondents average 71 percent of normal compared with 79 percent on April 1 last year and a 1929-38 average of 74.2 percent for the date.

The low condition of pastures at this season of the year appears to reflect injury to winter grazing plants and delayed development of early grass in the South, very little pasturage available from fall-sown grains in the central and lower Plains States, a shortage of old feed carried over in some limited areas where fall drought and close grazing depleted pastures at the end of last season, and prospects for a late start of pastures in the northern areas where grass usually does not furnish much feed for livestock for several weeks after this date. Moisture supplies have been much improved by winter snows and rain and in most areas appear sufficient to start new grass, so the condition of pastures in the next month or two may improve greatly with the coming of warmer weather.

In the South where late winter and early spring this year have been marked with subnormal temperatures, snows, and late freezes, pasture grasses on April l were much behind their usual stage of development. In the Southern States east of the Mississippi and in Louisiana moisture supplies on April l were generally ample and, with the warmer weather which has prevailed in the closing days of March and in early April, rapid development may be expected. In Oklahoma, Arkansas, and the northern two-thirds of Texas lack of sufficient moisture has tended to retard spring growth, but the rather general rains coming in the first 10 days of April are expected to be very beneficial to pasture development in the next few weeks.

In eastern Wyoming, eastern Colorado, western Nebraska, western Kansas, and Oklahoma, old feed was generally short, but in most of the eastern Rocky Mountain and Great Plains area, except in western Kansas, there appears to be sufficient surface moisture to start new feed. Over much of this territory, however, subsoil moisture is lacking and additional rainfall will be needed to insure continued growth. In this area wheat and rye pastures are furnishing very little feed for livestock this year.

In the North Central States east of the Great Plains and in the Northeastern States, where reports on pastures at this season reflect prospects for pastures rather than feed being secured, the grass this year, where started, appears to be from 10 days to 2 weeks behind schedule. In the more northern States frost was still in the ground on April 1, and much pasture was either covered with snow or only recently exposed. In most parts of this area that were dry last fall, snows and winter rainfall have improved moisture conditions and, while pastures may be later than usual, they should soon be supplying sufficient feed.

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